pered, use his favorite arm, the artillery, which he frequently massed with' terrible effect on the wings, while his effective cavalry were sent in repeated onsets to break his enemy's center, and deliver the opposing ranks in broken masses to the musket-fire and bayonet charge of his infantry. Such fields were, of course, numerous between Tortona on the Scrivia and Alessandria on the Tanaro just west of its confluence with the Bormida. The best was near the great highway which, coming from the east, connects these two towns, and goes on, due westward, by Asti to Turin. Two roads of importance lead southerly, one from each town, to Novi, where they unite, and then proceed to Genoa. On the northern side of the triangle thus formed, and. only three miles eastward from Alessandria, lies the hamlet of Marengo, where Victor was posted on June thirteenth, awaiting the attack of Melas when he should sally from the fortress. Lannes was about three miles behind at San Giuliano. Desaix had been sent southward toward Novi, lest Melas should swerve in that direction to try a flank movement. Bonaparte, with the consular guard, — a picked corps of twelve hundred trusted veterans which he had developed from that formed for personal protection in his first Italian campaign, — stood at Tortona. He could hardly trust himself to believe that the Austrians would be bold enough to make a direct attack, and had therefore disposed his troops in this scattered way.

But Melas, though slow and old-fashioned, was intrepid, and the Austrians were daring fighters. On the morning of the fourteenth he began to cross the Bormida, and as his van drove the French outposts to Marengo, he was able to deploy east of the stream. Victor received orders to hold the village at any cost, in order to gain time for concentrating the scattered